Yet, domestic policy-makers in low and lower-middle income countries who want more and better data on food systems face a range of barriers: lack of coordination among donors, limited data and statistical capacity and – most importantly – the lack of effective investment.

The purpose of this session is to explore why optimizing the use of data in decision-making is a key element of implementing national pathways for food systems transformation and how more coherent and coordinated donor support for data and statistical systems can drive food systems transformation at the national level and a more coherent and effective global response to current crises.

**BACKGROUND**

Low- and middle-income countries face a severe information gap that is holding back food systems transformation. Collectively, they spend around US$190 billion annually on agriculture to address food insecurity. Yet, the data to effectively target this spending or measure results is often patchy, outdated, or simply does not exist.

Fewer than 10 per cent of countries globally have the capacity to collect or publish sufficiently disaggregated data on agri-food systems. As an example, data on small-holder farmers - a key indicator for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on ending hunger - is available for income in 38 countries and productivity in only 11 countries.

Data must underpin food systems transformation. Why? With accurate, accessible and timely disaggregated data, domestic planners and policy-makers can effectively allocate resources and respond to ongoing crises. Farmers with data on environmental changes can know better when to plant and harvest. Donors can target funds to have a greater impact.


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